

Appl. No. 10/013,984
Amdt. Dated September 5, 2003
Reply to Office Action of June 5, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A topsheet for disposable wearing articles which comprises:

a nonwoven fabric having an upper surface and a lower surface; and

a plurality of openings formed in said nonwoven fabric, said plurality of openings extending through both said upper and lower surfaces,

~~said nonwoven fabric having a generally uniform thickness,~~

each of said plurality of openings having an area of about $0.16 - 5 \text{ mm}^2$ and a periphery portion adjacent said upper surface in which only a part of the periphery portion has an increased thickness as compared to ~~said generally uniform~~ an adjacent thickness of said nonwoven fabric so as to ~~make portions of said openings protuberant~~ form protuberances that extend upward from said upper surface.

Claim 2 (currently amended): The topsheet according to Claim 1, wherein said nonwoven fabric has a longitudinal direction and a transverse direction both orthogonal to a thickness direction of said nonwoven fabric and said ~~parts of the periphery portions of said plurality of openings which are~~

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~~protuberated upward~~ protuberances are formed aside of said plurality of openings in one of said longitudinal and transverse directions.

Claim 3 (currently amended): The topsheet according to Claim 1, wherein said ~~parts of the periphery~~ portions of said plurality of openings are increased in thickness upward from said upper surface by protuberances have a thickness which is about 0.1 - 2 mm as compared to said generally uniform greater than a thickness of the adjacent thickness of said nonwoven fabric.

3 | Claim 4 (currently amended): The topsheet according to Claim 1, wherein said ~~parts of the periphery~~ portions of said plurality of openings which are ~~protuberated upward~~ protuberances have a density which is higher than a density of surrounding portions of said nonwoven fabric extending around said ~~parts of the portions~~ protuberances.

Claim 5 (original): The topsheet according to Claim 1, wherein a total area of said plurality of openings occupies 2 - 60 % of a surface area of said nonwoven fabric.

Claim 6 (original): The topsheet according to Claim 1, wherein said nonwoven fabric is made of thermoplastic synthetic fibers.

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Claim 7 (original): The topsheet according to Claim 1, wherein said upper surface of said nonwoven fabric is covered with a plurality of ribbon-like thermoplastic synthetic resin film strips spaced in parallel to one another and extending in one of a longitudinal direction and a transverse direction.
